VERDICTS
OF THE
LEARNED
CONCERNING
VIRGIL and *HOMER*'s
Heroic Poems.

Nihil poteſt placere quod non decet. Quintil.

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TO THE READER.

AS I profess to say nothing of my own Stock, so I have no cause to fear, that I am accountable for the Truth of these Censures. I think my self accountable only for the Faithfulness of the Quotations, which I joyn to each Saying. My Authors then may speak for themselves, without my being ingag'd to take the part of any, or to maintain their Sentiments. So that 'tis free for each Reader in particular, either to become the free Censurer of these Criticks with as much Authority, as they have taken to Censure Homer and Virgil, or to joyn with them in their Verdicts.

As these Judgments of my Authors are not Uniform, no not in one and the same Author, (as 'tis evident in Rapin himself) 'tis plain,

that in such a Variety *of Opinions some must needs stray both from* Truth *and* Justice. *But this Discernment being above my* Reach, *I leave the Delight to the* Reader *himself to judge thereof: not but that now and then I give a hint of what I think more or less of their Authority.*

Verdicts

Verdicts of the Learned

CONCERNING

VIRGIL and *HOMER.*

Section I.

The Excellency and Nature of an Heroic Poem, *and how to judge well thereof.*

IF we consider well the main *End* of an *Heroic Poem*, which is to direct Persons of Quality, 'tis the noblest and most important Work of the Mind. If we consider the Labour and Art about it, 'tis the most sublime, the most ingenious, and the hardest; nay, beyond it there's nothing richer, or more magnificent to be found. A Man cannot have too much *Wit* to undertake it, nor too long a *Life* to compleat it. All sorts of Learning must be brought thither in refined Abstracts, and the Art to make such Quintessences is a sort of *Chymistry* known to few. Sublime Notions, and magnificent Representations, which are not to be found in every Stall, are the Paterns to be imploy'd there. The Wit which an *Heroic Poem* requires, ought to be of the *first Rate* of Wits, who are among us, what the *Seraphim* are among the *Angels.*

'Twere then to require too much, to have the *Undertakers* of such a long and laborious Fabrick, to be *infallible.* Hitherto none have set their hands to it, who stood not in need of Pardon, for many things. *Homer* indeed had the Honour to work therein without a Director and Patern: But 'tis not granted,

that

that he did without Fault what he did without Model; ſince he ſlumbers ſometimes according to *Horace. Bonus aliquando dormitat Homerus.* Tho' *Virgil* has copied out the beſt Paſſages, and that the Copy is more exact than the Original; nevertheleſs we muſt acknowledge, that had he been yet more exact, he had ſtood in need of no Apologies; nor had the *Grammarians* put him ſo often to the rack, to be reveng'd of the trouble he gives them. So that, notwithſtanding all the tranſcendent *Elogiums* of *Homer* and *Virgil* in the Schools; yet is *the perfect Heroic Poet ſtill to be born,* as well as the compleat Prince, or the perfect Captain.

To clear this Paradox, we muſt not conſider *Homer* and *Virgil*'s Poems by their *Superficies*, Outſide, or by Pieces, like meer Grammarians, as *Macrobius, Jul. Scaliger*, and *Ful. Urſinus* have done; But to ſurvey well theſe great Works, we muſt fathom what they have that's moſt Eſſential; We muſt, ſays *Rapin*, ſurvey all the Proportions thereof, conſider whether all the Beauties are well placed, whether the *Probable* and *Wonderful* are judiciouſly obſerv'd; whether the Poetic Licences are not either too ſtrong, or ſtretcht too far; whether all the *Decorums* of good Manners and Morals are exactly kept; whether the Expreſſions are delicate and paſſionate; whether all is in its place, and keeps up its due Character; whether good Senſe runs thro' the whole, and whether all things are as they ought to be. For nothing can pleaſe unleſs ſo, according to the great Principle of *Quintilian: Nihil poteſt placere quod non decet.* This is what the Skilful conſider, and not external Ornaments which detain the Ignorant.

Compar. Hom. Virgil. ch. 16.

If the Works of *Homer* and *Virgil* were loſt, I ſhould be very curious to know what others had ſaid of them, who had ſeen them. But ſince their Works are in our hands, to what purpoſe trouble we our ſelves much, about what *Plato, Ariſtotle, Paterculus, Plutarch, Ælian, Boſſu*, and *Thomaſſin* have ſaid of them, they being no Poets? Let us then conſider them by the true Rules of Heroic Poeſie, and judge of their eſſential Parts our ſelves.

According to the Doctrine of *Ariſtotle, Mambrunus, Rapin*, and *Ruæus*, an Heroic Poem is an Imitation of an illuſtrious and compleat

compleat Action, written in long Verſe, to ſtir up Gentlemen to gallant Actions with Wonder and Delight. This ſort of Poem comprehends five main and eſſential Things. 1. The Action. 2. The Fable. 3. The Characters. 4. The Sentiments. 5. The Expreſſion.

The *Action* is the Matter and Subject of the Poem. The *Fable* is the Form and Contrivance of that Action. The *Characters* are the main End and Drift of the Poem. The *Sentiments* and the *Expreſſion* are neceſſary Ornaments. The Poet takes the Action from the Hero, the Fable from the Rules of Art, the Characters from Moral Philoſophy, the Sentiments from Logick and good Senſe, the Expreſſion from Grammar and Rhetorick.

SECT. II.

The Matter or Action of Homer *and* Virgil's *Poems.*

RULE 1.

THE Matter of an Heroic Poem is the Subject which the Poet undertakes, and propoſes to himſelf to work upon. Now according to *Ariſtotle*, *Rapin* and *Boſſu*, this Action ought to have theſe four Conditions. To be *One*, compleat, illuſtrious, and not exceeding the length of a Year. 1. *One*, that is, chiefly performed, and in one continued ſpace of time without a perfect Intermiſſion; and moreover, ſuch as cannot be divided into other whole and compleat Actions. 2. *Illuſtrious*, and conſequently of eminent Men, and in ſome famous and important Matter too, *res geſtæ, regumque, ducumque.* 3. *Compleat*, to which nothing is wanting of all things that may bring it to the end. 4. Of *certain Length*, not exceeding the ſpace of a Year, from the time where the Poet begins.

Homer's *Action compar'd with the Rule.*

Whether the main Action of the *Iliads* conſiſts in the War of *Troy*, as ſome pretend with *Horace*, or whether in the Anger of *Achilles*,

Achilles, as others with *Boſſu* will have it, becauſe the Death of *Hector* ends not the War, ſince the Siege of *Troy* laſted a Year after, it is plainly defective, in that 'tis liable to be thus controverted. According to *Boſſu* 'tis no Action at all, but a *Paſſion*, and a very unjuſt one too, far from being *Illuſtrious*; or if it is an Action, *Homer* himſelf owns, that it was prejudicial both to his own Country and Party. The Action ought to have a Beginning, a Middle, and an End, ſays *Ariſtotle*. But, tho' this Anger of *Achilles* has a Beginning, yet has it neither End nor Middle, ſays *Rapin*; for 'tis diſcarded, (adds the ſame Author) by another Anger of *Achilles* againſt *Hector*, for the Death of *Patroclus*: So that there are two Angers, the one for the loſs of his Friend, the other for the loſs of his Miſtreſs, and what is worſt of all, the reſt of the Poem has no connexion with this Anger. *Homer* not minding it in the ſpace of 18 Books, as if he had forgot his own Deſign.

The Action of the *Odyſſea* (continues *Rapin, Comp. Hom. & Virg. Chap.* 6.) is not more perfect, than that of the *Ilias*. It begins by the Voyages of *Telemachus*, and ends by thoſe of *Ulyſſes*. This makes *Paul Beno* to ſay, that the Fable of the *Odyſſea* is double. In reality, concludes *Rapin*, one knows not what to make of the firſt four Books. *A le bien prendre, on ne ſcait ce que c'eſt*. So that neither of the Actions are One, Compleat, or Illuſtrious.

Virgil's *Action compar'd with the Rule.*

Tho' 'tis granted by all, that the Action of the *Æneis* was equal to the greatneſs and magnificence of the *Roman* Empire, yet is it vicious, and mangled in the condition we have it, ſays *Mambrunus*, who has writ both an Heroic Poem on *Conſtantine* in 12 Books, and a large Treatiſe of Heroic Poeſie. And indeed, as to the *Unity* of *Virgil*'s Action, good Father *Boſſu* confeſſes ingeniouſly, that 'tis eaſier to tell wherein the Unity of the Epick Action conſiſts not, than to ſay in what it conſiſts. *Du Poem Epic. Book* 2. *Chap.* 7. For ſome place the Action in the Voyage of *Æneas*, in imitation of the *Odyſſea*, others in the War of *Italy*, in imitation of the *Iliads*.

As

As to the Compleatneſs of the Action, both the *Scaligers*, and after them *Perrault*, *Paral. des Anciens & Modern.* 2. *Vol.* hold, that *Virgil*'s Action is not compleat nor finiſht; and all the Ancients held, adds *Joſeph Scaliger*, that *Virgil* intended 24 Books in imitation of *Homer*. But being prevented by death, he therefore ordered his *Æneis* to be burnt, (*ibit ad ignes*) knowing it to be but a Piece of a great Work, unfiniſhed, as the unfiniſht Verſes alſo demonſtrate. This made *Mapheus Vegio* add a thirteenth Book to the *Æneis*.

I cannot endure, ſays *Perrault* (in the fore-mentioned place) that *Virgil*'s *Æneis* ſhould end at the Death of *Turnus*. 'Tis true, that by his death and that of *Amata*, great Obſtacles are remov'd, yet is not *Æneas* ſettled King of the *Latines*. The Reader cannot be fully ſatisfied, to behold the Affairs of *Æneas* at a ſtand in ſo fair a progreſs. He wants to ſee him marry *Lavinia*, and by that means take poſſeſſion of the Kingdom of the *Latines*, without which one may juſtly queſtion whether it ever came to paſs. This Marriage would only have compleated what is but yet begun; it had ſetled the Foundation of the *Roman* Empire, which is the main Action of the Poem. Thus then, tho' *Virgil*'s *Æneis* has a Beginning, and a Middle, yet wants it ſtill an End, to compleat the Action.

SECT. III.

The Form and Contrivance of Virgil *and* Homer's *Fable.*

RULE II.

THE Fable, according to *Ariſtotle*, is the chief thing in an Heroic Poem, is the Soul, ψυχὴ and Foundation thereof, is the Principle which gives, as it were, Life, and moves all the Springs of that Engine. This Fable and Contrivance conſiſts chiefly in three Points. 1. In the *Orderly* Narration of the chief Action, and of all the Materials that make it up: And this *Order* is twofold, Natural, or Artificial, beginning by the Middle. 2. In the exact proportion of the *Probable* and

Wonderful, whereof the first makes it worthy of Belief, and the next of Admiration. 3. In the marshalling and coherence of the *Episodes* or by-Histories, with the chief Action.

Homer's *Fable compar'd with the Rule.*

1. Tho' *Halicarnasseus, Opusc. Critic.* commends *Homer* chiefly for his Fable, yet (says *Rapin, Comparis. Ch.* 6.) *Homer* manages so little the *Probable*, and stretches so far the *Wonderful*, out of too great a desire to raise always Admiration, that he leaves nothing to be done, neither by Reason, nor Passion, no nor by Nature, but all is done by *Machines*. The Gods are imploy'd upon all occasions, without the least regard either to their Rank, or to the peace and tranquillity of their Condition, *per ambages Deorumque ministeria. Stat.*

If *Priamus* has lost *Hector*, *Jove* must needs send the Goddess *Iris* his Messenger, to admonish him to take care of the Corps of his Son, and to redeem it from *Achilles*. This Father so tender of his Son, could not he think of it himself? But must have a Machine to put him in mind that he is a Father. *Mercury* becomes *Priamus* his Coachman, to bring him to *Achilles* to desire the Body of his Son. And to prevent the danger of Straglers coming to the Camp of the *Greeks*, *Mercury* casts them all asleep, and prepares the heart of *Achilles* by some feelings of compassion; nay *Thetis*, *Achilles*'s Mother, works upon him also, by the order of *Jove*. Thus *Homer* disposes of the Gods, as of so many Personages of the Stage.

2. As to the mixture of *Episodes* with the chief Action, they are forced and unnatural. *Homer* begins his *Odyssea*, which is his best Poem, says *Rapin* again, by an *Episod.* of four Books. He strays from his Matter, almost before he is enter'd into it; and to make a regular Building, he begins by a piece out of the Work. *On ne scait ce que c'est*, says *Rapin*.

3. What Relation has the Wound which *Diomedes* gave to *Mars*, to the anger of *Achilles*? *Homer* enlarges much on this Adventure in the fifth Book of his *Iliads*. *Mars* who weeps like a Child, comes and makes his complaint to *Jove*, who smartly jeers him. Yet *Paon* the Doctor of the Gods is call'd to cure him,

him, and the Poet who likes this Paſſage, ſtretches it too far. He trifles thereupon, and one would pity him, but that we are prepoſſeſs'd with the greatneſs of his Genius.

4. *Homer*'s Compariſons are cold and forced, but never Excellent, ſays *Perrault*. Was there ever any thing ſo ridiculous, as to compare *Ajax* in the midſt of a bloody Battle, *to an Aſs grazing in Corn?* And his *Deſcriptions* are both too frequent, and too long.

Virgil's *Fable compar'd with the Rule.*

Tho' Monſieur *Segrais* in his Preface to the *Æneis*, maintains, that the prime beauty of that Poem conſiſts in the wonderful Narration, nevertheleſs *Perrault* boldly ſpeaks thus: [*Parallel of Ancient and Modern.*] I believe that all Men of Senſe, and that are Impartial, will think with me; That the Adventure of the Wooden Horſe in the ſecond Book *inſtar montis equum*, is the moſt childiſh part of all the *Æneis*. What! a City which had withſtood all the Arts of *Greece* for the ſpace of ten Years, lets herſelf be taken in one Night by a *Stalking-Horſe! Virgil* underſtood ill it ſeems the temper of *Ulyſſes*, to think he would ſhut himſelf up in that Engine; he was too crafty to do it: And this old Rook, whoſe Wiles are ſo cry'd up by Antiquity, had better devices how to take Cities. Yet, if we believe *Virgil*, Queen *Dido* was charm'd with the Story of the Wooden Horſe, and ſo might any Cook-Maid with the Boys and Pedants in the Schools: But never can prove either *Probable* or *Wonderful* to any Man of Senſe.

2. *Peletier*, in his *Poetic Art*, ſays; that there are in *Virgil*'s *Æneis* great number of faults againſt *Probability*, and moſt of them needleſs too, where he has placed them. What more improbable, than the Golden Bough in the ſixth of the *Æneis*,

——————— *Latet arbore opaca*
Aureus, & foliis & lento vimine Ramus.

What again more incredible, than the Twigs that ſprang out of *Polydorus*, in the third Book?

Forte fuit juxta Tumulus, quo cornea ſumma
Virgulta, &c

Are *Don Quixot*'s Windmills (turn'd into Gyants in his Brain) more ridiculous and childiſh, than the metamorphoſing of *Æneas*'s Ship and whole Fleet into Sea-Nymphs? in the 9th. Book.

——Hinc Virgineæ——————
Reddunter totidem facies pontoque feruntur,
Quæ prius æratæ ſteterant ad littora proræ.

3. But ſays again *Perrault* in his *Parallel,* how comes *Neptune* to threaten ſo ſeverely the poor harmleſs Wind *Zephyrus,* for the Storm in the firſt Book?

Eurum ad ſe Zephyrumque vocat, &c.
Quos Ego, &c.

What ſhare had he in that Tempeſt? He that has not the force to beat down a Tulip, how could he ſwell up the Sea? He is the Ladies favourite, and ſcarce can ruffle a towring Commode.

4. As to *Virgil*'s *Epiſodes,* Father *Rapin* in his *Reflections on Poeſie,* finds faults with the exceſſive length of the *Epiſod* about the taking of *Troy,* which contains two whole Books, the ſecond and third of the Poem, ſcarce pardonable, ſays he, becauſe they hold out a whole Night. I queſtion not but good Queen *Dido* yawn'd often all the time, at the Story of *Æneas*'s Adventures; and that's an Obſervation, adds *Perrault,* which *Virgil*'s Commentators have paſs'd by in ſilence.

But all Authors have obſerved two conſiderable Faults of *Achroniſm* and *Slander* in that *Epiſod* of *Dido* in the fourth Book. By the firſt of falſe *Chronology,* he makes that Princeſs Elder by 300 Years than in reality ſhe was. By the other of *Scandal* he has diſgrac'd the moſt Diſcreet and Vertuous Princeſs of her Age, as all Hiſtorians, Poets, and Fathers agree, witneſs this Epigram of *Auſonius* in *Scaliger.*

Invida

Invida cur in me ſtimulaſti Muſa Maronem,
Fingeret ut in me damna pudicitiæ, &c.

And thus has utterly ruined her Reputation in the Mind of all Poſterity. This is both a baſe and unpardonable Fault in *Virgil*, to raiſe the Glory of the *Romans*, by ruining the good Name of a Woman, the Ornament of her Sex; becauſe forſooth ſhe was the Foundreſs of an hoſtile City.

SECT. IV.

Homer *and* Virgil's *Characters of their Hero's, which is the End of Epick Poeſie.*

RULE III.

THE end of Heroic Poeſie being to give Inſtructions by Examples to Perſons of Quality, the Characters of Vertues and Vices muſt be carefully drawn; the Characters of *Vertues*, Wiſdom, Courage, Piety, Temperance, Patience, *&c.* to embrace them: and the Characters of *Vices*; Atheiſm, Anger, Drunkenneſs, Gaming, Luſt, *&c.* to avoid them. As then Heroic Virtue (according to *Ariſtotle* in his *Ethicks*) is made up of all Virtues, ſo the Character of an Hero muſt be made up Three Virtues at leaſt ſays *Boſſu*. The Firſt makes up his Characteriſtical and Conſtant Virtue; as *Piety* in *Æneas*, and *Prudence* in *Ulyſſes*, to diſtinguiſh them plainly and at firſt ſight from the other Hero's. The Secondary Virtues are only ornamental, as *Friendſhip* in *Achilles*. The Third is *Valour*, which is neceſſary and common to all Heroes.

Homers *Characters compared with the Rule.*

Tho' *Horace* thinks *Homer* fitter to teach Morals to Mankind than the Philoſophers of old;

Quic-

Quicquid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius & melius Chryſippo & Crantore dicit.

And tho' *Ger. Jo. Voſſius de nat. Poetic. Cap.* 9. is of the ſame Mind; yet *Rapin*, who ſeems to have examined better *Homer*'s good and bad Qualities, both in his *Reflexions* on *Poeſie*, and his *Compariſon* of *Homer* and *Virgil*, pretends that *Homer* has not kept the Characters of his Heros, nor their Manners in a due *Decorum*. And indeed, *Homer*, adds he, repreſents to us hard and cruel Fathers, weak and paſſionate Heros, he might have added clowniſh and butcherly ones; wretched, reſtleſs, quarrelſom Gods who cannot endure each other.

Ariſtotle in his *Poetick Art*, wills that the Images and Characters which the Poet makes, repreſent Perſons not ſuch as they really are, but ſuch as they ought to be, yet the Character of *Achilles* the chief Hero ſeems ill drawn. For as *Horace* obſerves, tho' *Achilles* is valiant, yet is he cholerick, fierce, violent, injuſt, he ſlights the Laws, and puts all his Reaſon in the Sword he bears by his ſide.

Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
Jura negat ſibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis.

Moreover he is *cruel* to the Corps of *Hector*, even to delight in Revenge over it, and by an *Avarice* without Example, ſells to an afflicted Father the Body of his Son. Finally, this Hero of *Homer*, of ſo great a Name, and ſo cry'd up in all Ages, is an Abſtract of Imperfection and Defaults, *ce Heros eſt un abrege d' imperfections & de defauts*, ſays *Rapin*, Parallel of *Hom. & Virg. c.* 4. *Tully* himſelf ſpeaks againſt *Achilles*'s inhuman dealing with the Corps of *Hector*, *Trahit Hectorem ad currum religatum Achilles, lacerari eum & ſentire, credo, putat, & ulciſcitur, ut ſibi videtur.* Orat. Tuſc. Lib. 1. What again can be more unworthy of a Hero, than *Achilles* Zeal againſt the *Flies* about the Wounds of *Patroclus* his Friend? *Lib.* 19. *Iliad.*

I ſpeak not of the other Heros of the *Iliad*, where Kings and Princes do one another all ſort of baſe Injuries like Porters, where

where *Achilles* calls King *Agamemnon* drunken Sot, and impudent Dog's-face. 'Tis not possible that chief Officers were so brutish as to do so: or if that hapned, they are Manners too indecent to be put into an Heroic Poem, where things ought to be placed, for the Instruction of young Gentlemen. Yet, to hear with what respect good Father *Bossu* speaks of the *Iliads*, one wou'd think he made a Commentary on holy Scripture.

I pass to the *Odyssea*, says *Perrault* in his *Parallel*, where *Ulysses* is such a Medly of Prudence and Knavery, of Heroic and Meanness, that 'tis almost impossible to define it well. This Prince whom *Homer* sets forth as a Patern of *Wisdom*, lets himself be made drunk by the *Pheacians*, for which the Poet is blamed both by *Aristotle* and *Philostratus*. But what Extravagance in this perfectly wise Man, to forget so soon his Wife, so virtuous a Princess, and his Son who was so dear to him, to stay so long with *Calypso* a Jilt, and run after *Circe* the famous Sorceress. Had then *Homer* drawn well *Ulysses* Character, we need not be at a stand to know whether he was an honest Man, or a Knave.

2. As to the Characters of *Homer*'s *Gods*, this Poet attributes to them criminal Actions, whereof none are capable but the most wicked amongst Men, says *Plato in Lib.* 2. *&* 3. *de Legibus*. *Tully* also blames *Homer* for giving to Gods the Imperfections of Men, wishing rather that he had given to Men some of the excellent Qualifications of the Gods, *Humana ad Deos transferebat, Divina mallem ad nos.*

Virgil's *Characters compar'd with the Rule.*

The main and constant Character of *Æneas* being *Piety*, says *Bossu*: What had that Piety of Father *Æneas* to do in the Cave with *Dido* Queen of *Carthage*? says *Perrault*, [*Parallel* of *Ancient* and *Modern*.] A very homely Room to court a Lady in. Nay his pretended Piety at every turn, may be stiled *Superstition*, and make him rather pass for the Founder of a Religious Order, than of the *Roman* Empire. 2. *Æneas* his Secondary sort of Ornamental Qualifications are *Tears* and *Pity*: but who is able to endure his briny Tears at every Moment, nay Twice or Thrice in the same Page, and again Four Times in a Dozen Lines, especially

cially in the Firſt, Sixth, and Eleventh Books: He weeps at the ſight of Pictures, which repreſent the Adventures of the Siege of *Troy*.

1. Book. *Conſtitit & lacrymans* ——
Sunt lacrymæ rerum ——
Agnoſcit lacrymans ——

And not only his Eyes water and ſhed ſome drops of Tears, as the Love of his Country may draw from a Native; but he is all in a Bath of Tears, attended with heavy Sighs and Groans:

Multa gemens, largoque humectat flumine vultum.

This continual blubbring on the ſame Account, is not proper to the Sorrow of that Nature. He weeps at the parting from *Aceſtes*: *lacrymans commendat Aceſtes*; and at the drowning of *Palinurus* his Pilot; nay *Virgil* begins his Sixth Book with his Hero's weeping; *Sic fatur lacrymans*, when he ſees *Dido* in Hell, as alſo for his Wife *Creuſa*, and likewiſe for Prince *Pallas*.

2. Book. *Lacrymis ita fatur abortis.*
Hæc ubi deflevit.
Spargitur & tellus lacrymis, ſparguntur & arma.

And upon ſundry other Occaſions, where ſuch exceſſive tenderneſs becomes not either a Hero, or his Army. There never was as I think, ſuch a weeping, blubbring, ſighing, groaning, nay bawling Hero in all Hiſtory. *Implevi clamore vias*, ſays he of himſelf.

But what is yet more intolerable in a Hero, are *Æneas* frequent Frights and Fears, Tremblings and cold Sweats, upon all ſuddain and unexpected Accidents. At the very firſt beginning we find him ſeiz'd with a great fright in a Storm at Sea, wherein he ſhakes for fear.

Extemplo Æneæ ſolvuntur frigore membra.
Ingemuit. ——

In

In the ſecond and third Book, he is frighted with Spirits, at the Viſion of which he ſays of himſelf:

Obſtupui ſteteruntque Comæ, & vox faucibus hæſit.
Tum vero ancipiti mentem formidine preſſus
Obſtupui, ſteteruntque Comæ, & vox faucibus hæſit.
——————— Mihi frigidus horror
Membra quatit gelidusque coit formidine ſanguis.
Tum gelidus toto manabat corpore ſudor.

Another but *Virgil* would have given Courage to his Hero, would have made him bold, and undaunted at the Fury of the Winds: and whilſt vulgar Souls are dejected, he ſhould have ſhew'd Courage above all Dangers; Nevertheleſs the Poet expoſes to the ſight of the *Trojans* an Hero half dead for fear. Theſe Tears and Frights might be excuſable in his Son *Aſcanius*, becauſe a Child, but *Æneas* muſt not be ſo Childiſh. No, this aptneſs to Start and Tremble upon all occaſions, ſeems not Heroic, nor to become the Founder of the *Roman* Empire, and the Father of all the *Cæſars*.

And as for the *Courage* of *Æneas*, it may be alſo juſtly queſtion'd from his way of cloſing the main Action of the Poem: I mean, his fighting with, and killing *Turnus*. Nor is the Valour of *Turnus* more evident: For, when *Turnus* ſaw all the Eyes of the *Latines* bent upon him, to decide the War by a *Duel* with *Æneas*, he bravely anſwers their expectation at firſt, ſaying:

——Hac Dardanium dextrâ ſub Tartara mittam.
——————Noſtro dirimatur ſanguine bellum.

But when, the next day, they came to agree upon the Conditions of the Fight, how alter'd is *Turnus* already! He is dejected both in Mind and Body, his Eyes are ſunk into his Head, and his Countenance is pale.

Inceſſu tacito progreſſus——demiſſo lumine Turnus,
Tabenteſque genæ, & juvenili in corpore pallor.

So that he caus'd the *Latines* to pity him.

——*Turni ſortem miſerantur iniquam.*

Tho' 'tis not *Virgil*'s buſineſs to commend much *Turnus*, yet ought he to look to the Credit of his Hero, who can reap no Honour, by fighting with ſuch a Cowardly Adverſary. But let us ſee further.

In the Fight the Sword of *Turnus* breaks.

——————*perfidus enſis*
Frangitur.——————————

Then *Turnus* runs away, and *Æneas* follows him. *Turnus* calls for a better Sword, but *Æneas* threatens Death to any that ſhall bring one.

Æneas mortem minatur.

Neither of them Act like Heros, but both Cowardly; and *Æneas* the more baſely of the two, becauſe Arm'd *Cap-a-pee*; nevertheleſs *Turnus* gets an Heavenly Sword at laſt. Now who will not expect ſome gallant Action done with it by this King of the *Rutilians?* and what can that Atchievement poſſibly be? Why truly, as if void of all Senſe and Underſtanding, ſays *Ruæus: Bonæ, rectæque mentis expertem,* he fairly puts up this miraculous Sword, and takes up a huge, huge Land-mark Stone, which twelve other ſtrong Men were not able to lift up:

——————*Saxum circumſpicit ingens,*
Saxum antiquum ingens,————
Limes agro poſitus,————————
Vix illud lecti bis ſex cervice ſubirent.

Turnus dares not Fight *Æneas* hand to hand, but Aſſaults him at a diſtance.

But *Æneas* eaſily declining the unwieldy Stone, run *Turnus* into the Thigh, who falling down diſarm'd, begg'd Quarter; yet *Æneas* kills him, tho' he conjures *Æneas* to grant him Life, by the very Ghoſt of his Father *Anchiſes.* —*Miſeri*

——————— *Miſeri te ſi qua parentis*
Tangere cura poteſt, oro, Dauni miſerere ſenectæ.

Tho' he owns him to be Victorious, and reſigns up to him *Lavinia* for Wife. *Viciſti, tua eſt Lavinia coniux*, but all Intreaties are vain to a Cowardly Adverſary. I know that the Death of *Turnus* is neceſſary to compleat the Action, in caſe *Virgil* intended to cloſe at the Death of *Turnus*, which many deny. But then he ſhould have brought it ſo about, as not to deſtroy the Character which he had given to *Æneas*.

Here, *Virgil* ſhews great want of Judgment both in the Characters of his two chief Heroes, as well as in the cloſe of the main Action. A judicious Heroic Poet would rather have made *Æneas* lightly arm'd, and yet have triumph'd over his Adverſary, arm'd *Cap-a-pee*. What a pretty thing it is to ſee *Æneas* purſue *Turnus*, who runs away as a Child, at the apprehenſion of a Spirit; nay, threatens to kill any that ſhall help *Turnus* to a Sword; thus waving to fight with an armed Man, when he himſelf is clad with an Armour wrought by *Vulcan*; thus, he declares for a Victory obtain'd not by Valour, but by Chance and Advantage. I thought one could not oppoſe to Hero's, Enemies too dreadful: and I have ever heard, that nought but an obſtinate Fight could gain a glorious Victory. On the other ſide, why does *Virgil* make *Turnus* throw ſuch a huge vaſt Stone? was he to fell Gyants? Had he the terror of the World to fight againſt? For, *Turnus* it ſeems is but a *Pygmy* before *Hercules*.

II. As to the Characters of *Virgil*'s *Gods* call'd Heavenly *Machines:* what a prepoſterous Perſonage *Virgil* makes *Juno* act all along the Poem; but eſpecially in the firſt Book. She has heard, *audierat*, pretends *Virgil*, (as if ſhe knew not but by hear-ſay:) That *Æneas* was to ſettle in *Italy*, and there found an Empire, which ſhould deſtroy her dearly beloved *Carthage*, *Tyrias olim quæ everteret Arces*; To prevent this, She with Godlike Charity, reſolves to deſtroy the *Trojans*, ſaying to *Eolus:*

——— *ſubmerſas obrue puppes,*
——— *Et diſjice corpora ponto.*

So that he caus'd the *Latines* to pity him.

——*Turni ſortem miſerantur iniquam.*

Tho' 'tis not *Virgil*'s buſineſs to commend much *Turnus*, yet ought he to look to the Credit of his Hero, who can reap no Honour, by fighting with ſuch a Cowardly Adverſary. But let us ſee further.

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——— *ſubmerſas obrue puppes,*
——— *Et diſjice corpora ponto.*

Is it poſſible the Gods can be ſo Angry? And indeed, do not you think that *Juno* grows a little too hot?

I ever thought nothing impoſſible to the Gods: but it pleas'd not the Poet to give her either Power or Credit, but only much Paſſion and Malice to deſtroy diſtreſſed Perſons, if ſhe can. What a prepoſterous Sight to behold the Wife of *Jove* in a petitioning Condition to *Eolus*, and ſo apprehenſive of a Denial, that ſhe proffers him one of her faireſt Nymphs *Deiopeia* for a Reward. What would not a God do for ſuch a dainty piece of Beauty! Whereupon the *Trojan* Fleet had unavoidably periſh'd, had not the God *Neptune* peep'd out of the Pool, and left *Juno* vext with Shame; ſo little Correſpondence is there between *Virgil*'s Gods.

Again, continues *Perrault*, is it a thing proper for *Venus*, to intreat her Husband *Vulcan* to make an Armour for *Æneas* her Baſtard by *Anchiſes*? to my thinking 'tis a very impudent Petition. Her Infidelity to her Husband ſeems ſomething leſs offenſive, than the Impudence of this Suit.

The cloſe of the main Action of the *Æneis*, ends alſo by a *Machine*, which utterly eclipſes all the Glory thereof, and therefore forbid by *Ariſtotle*. For, whilſt *Turnus* and *Æneas* are fighting, *Jove* ſends down ſuch an horrid *Fury*, that ſhe was able to fright not only a Man, but even whole Cities, *totas territat urbes*. Now this curſed *Fury* flew to and fro before the eyes of *Turnus*, and flapt ſo hard his Shield with her Wings, that a ſudden fear ſeiz'd on the young Prince.

Arrectæque horrore comæ, & vox faucibus hæſit.

Which made *Turnus* reply thus to *Æneas*, who baſely inſulted over him.

——— *Non me tua fervida terrent*
Dicta, ferox: Dii me terrent, & Jupiter hoſtis.

So that King *Turnus* is rather frighted out of his Wits, and overcome by *Jove* himſelf, than Conquer'd by *Æneas*.

Could not *Æneas* the main Hero of the Poem, fight with *Turnus* alone? Man to Man, King to King, Hero to Hero! *Ne Hercules quidem contra duos*; much leſs than young *Turnus*, againſt the

the thundring God, an horrid gastly *Fury*, and a conquering Hero. Thus is the pretended main Action spoiled in sundry respects.

SECT. V.

Homer *and* Virgil's *Sentiments in their Poems.*

RULE IV.

HEroic Sentiments consist in giving to each Person such Speeches, Actions, Manners and Affections, as are proper to their Age, Condition and other Circumstances. They must be 1. *True* and Exact; for, Truth is the very Soul of the Thought or Sentiment. 2. *Noble*, Sublime and Strong, to raise Admiration. 3. *Pleasing*, which springs from agreeable Objects. 4. *Plain* from all Obscurity.

Homer's *Sentiments compar'd to the Rule.*

Tho', both *Longinus* in his *Treatise* of *Sublime*, and *Rapin* in his *Compar.* of *Hom.* and *Virg. c.* 12. agree, That *Homer* is always noble in his Sentiment, as well as in his Expression; yet, as if the latter had forgot himself, he said before *Chap* 8. That *Homer*'s Sentiments are never so beautiful as his Discourses; because he minded not so much to think well, as to speak well. One cannot deny but that his Personages speak well; yet, for the most part their Sentiments are unworthy of their Characters. Thus,

In the Ninth Book of the *Iliads*, *Agamemnon* complaining to *Nestor* about the Absence of *Achilles*, *Nestor* tells him, that he will give him incomparable good Counsel, and that never any Man since the world stood, gave so wise and excellent. But a Man so wise ought to be more modest: Yet the Counsel he gives, adds *Rapin*, is no great Matter; since it amounts only to pacifie *Achilles*, to make him Satisfaction, and so get him to return to the Camp; which any ordinary Capacity might have said.

Again

Again, continues the ſame Critick, *Antilochus*, *Neſtor*'s Son, in the 23. Book of the *Iliads*, ſpeaks ſeriouſly to his Horſes, has a formal Diſcourſe with them, and conjures them to do their utmoſt to overcome *Menelaus* and *Diomedes* in the Courſe and Races run, for the Death of *Patroclus*.

Becauſe, ſays this trifling Orator, his Father will either ſell them, or cut their Throats, if they do otherwiſe.

Perrault, Parallelle Compar. of Hom. *and* Virg. *Tom.* 2. relates abundance of ridiculous and comical Sentiments, wherewith old *Homer* has ſtuft his Two Poems. Thus our celebrated Poet ſays in the firſt of his *Iliads*, that when it thunders, *Jove beats his Dam*; as when it rains and the Sun ſhines at once, Children ſay, *the Devil beats his*. This ſeems little worthy either of the God or the Poet,

In the *4th Book*, a Shepherd comparing the Beauty of his Miſtreſs, ſays, She is like to the flowers of a Meadow, which feed Cows very Fat, which give Milk very White, whereof they make excellent Cheeſes.

Homer compares *Ulyſſes* turning in his bed, and not being able to ſleep, to a Gut-pudding or Sawſage broyling on a Gridiron. Is this worthy of the florid, copious, majeſtick, nay divine *Homer*.

In the 4th Book, our great Poet telling how *Menelaus* was wounded in his white Thigh, ſays, *The black Blood came out of his Wound, as when a* Meonian *or* Carian *Woman dyes Ivory into Purple; to make Boſſes or Studs to Bridles of Horſes. This Ivory is in her Chamber, and ſeveral Knights would gladly have it; but they keep for the King this Ornament, which is honorable both to the Horſe and the Rider.* The beginning of this Compariſon is true and excellent; for, nothing reſembles better to Blood on a fair Skin, than Purple on Ivory: But all the reſt is meer Stuff and Nonſenſe. Methinks this Compariſon is made up of Three or Four Colours; and when ended, I know not where I am, nor how I find my ſelf with theſe Boſſes, Kings and Knights in a *Meonian* Woman's Cloſet, by the occaſion of a Wounded Man's Thigh.

Odyſſea Lib. 3. Prince *Telemachus*, having put on his fine Shoes, he calls his Council, wherein he repreſents to them, that the Suiters

Suiters of his Mother eat up his fat Oxen, Sheep and Goats; that he valu'd it not, if ſuch as they of his Council eat them; becauſe he knew they would pay him well, which is not to be expected from ſuch Gallants: and all this he ſays weeping. What Meanneſs, what Poverty! both in the Poet and the Prince he ſpeaks of.

But the whole Sixth Book of the *Odyſſea* is a dainty Diſh of Mirth, from one end to the other; where the Princeſs *Nauſica* Daughter to King *Alcinous*, goes to the River to waſh and buck the Cloaths, both of her Father and Three Brothers, alledging that the King ſhould have clean Linnen at leaſt when he went to Council. *Ulyſſes* awakened at the noiſe of theſe Landreſſes, came naked to *Nauſica*, holding only a leafy Bough before him to hide his nakedneſs. And thus they both went on talking together to the King's Palace, where they found the Queen ſitting on the ground in the Chimney-corner, and ſpinning by the light of the fire. There was alſo King *Alcinous* ſitting in his Chair like a God, that ſets himſelf to drink, ſays *Homer*. Then the King asked *Ulyſſes* what his Name was, for Every one has a Name, adds gravely that Prince; and during that Supper, he made a long Diſcourſe to *Ulyſſes*, wherein I will ſuppoſe there is Senſe, yet I ſee none. But *Ulyſſes* deſired the King to let him eat his Victuals quietly, for he was indeed hungry, not being a God, ſaid he. Yet was *Ulyſſes* better bred than to eat up all, but nobly carved a Raſher of Bacon, and gave it to the Piper behind him. When we are paſt Twelve years of Age, can one delight in ſuch Tales of ridiculous Heros, like, or more clowniſh than our common Farmers? 'Twere an endleſs buſineſs to reckon up all.

Virgil's *Sentiments compared with the Rule.*

Tho' *Virgil* is not liable to ſo many Weakneſſes in this Point as *Homer*, yet he forgets himſelf ſometimes, and falls now and then from his uſual Heroic Gravity. What think you of this Obſervation which *Aſcanius* makes in eating his Luncheon of Bread, on which was his Meat: Ah! we have eat up our Tables. *Book* 7. *v.* 116.

Heus!

Heus! etiam menſus conſumimus, inquit Iülus.

By which Oracle *Æneas* knew they were at the end of their Troubles. Is this Diſcovery grave enough for a Poem as lofty as is the *Æneis?* Neither can the Father forbear from ſhewing his Approbation of this his Sons unridling ſo well the Harpy *Celeno*'s Prophecy in the 3d Book *of eating their Tables,*

Ibitis Italiam —— ——
Sed non ante datam cingetis mœnibus urbem,
Quam vos dira fames —— ——
Ambeſas ſubigat malis abſumere menſas. 257.

I know the ancient Auguries were held as very ſerious things by the Heathens: But methinks the reſolving thus the difficulty, is little ſo.

2. But nothing betrays more either the meanneſs of *Virgil*'s Sentiments, or the barrenneſs of his Invention, than the ſneaking arrival of the *Trojans* at *Carthage,* in the 1. Book, whether of *Æneas* himſelf, or of his other chief Officers, *Antheus*, *Sergeſtus*, *Cleanthus*, or the great *Ilioneus*, who all come in begging Addreſſes to Queen *Dido*;

Troes te miſeri oramus —— *propius res aſpice noſtras.*

Proteſting that they landed not to prey in her Country, in an hoſtile Manner as Pyrates; becauſe, ſay they, our Pride and Courage are quite dejected.

Non ea vis animo, nec tanta ſuperbia victis.

A Poet of more generous Sentiments, would rather have brought them (with flying Colours) to *Carthage*, by making them accidentally neceſſary to that Queen, at their landing; either by reſcuing her from the raviſhing hands of King *Jarbas* a neighbouring Prince, whom ſhe had often baffled in his Pretenſions, or from the Danger of ſome furious Lion (frequent in thoſe parts) as ſhe is taking the Air; or any other nobler way, to engage Queen *Dido*'s Kindneſs to them.

But.

But if theſe ſhipwrackt *Banditti* came ſneakingly to *Carthage*, they go from it as unthankfully. Queen *Dido* out of a Royal Generoſity opens to them her Ports, admits *Æneas* into her Palace, repairs his Ships, and heaps upon him all ſorts of Benefits. But, when the perfidious *Trojan* is recruited, his Fleet fitted up, and had got from this generous Princeſs what he could, then he baſely forſakes her; and under pretence of a Viſion, he tells her, 'tis by the Will of the Gods that he departs.

——— *Interpres Divum* ——— ———
——— ——— *celeres mandata per auras.*
Detulit. ——— ——— ———

A gallant Man would not have believed ſo lightly on the Truth of an Apparition.

Scarce had *Mercury* ended his Meſſage, but he takes leave of the Queen. I know, ſays he, great Princeſs, how much I am beholden to you, and it ſhall never eſcape my Memory; and were not I forc'd to obey the Gods who call me to *Italy*; If I could diſpoſe of my own ſelf----- What think ye he would do? admire how well he plays the Gallant; doubtleſs ſtay at *Carthage*, and live with *Dido*: but no ſuch thing: I would go adds he, to repair the Ruines of *Troy*, and reſtore the Throne of *Priamus:*

Urbem Trojanam primum, dulceſque meorum
Reliquias colerem, Priami, &c. ———

Was there ever ſeen ſuch a cold parting from a Miſtreſs ſince the days of *Virgil?* Did ever any Man of Wit expreſs ſuch flat Sentiments on ſuch a tender Occaſion?

3. May not we alſo reckon among *Virgil*'s Sentiments, the moral Reflexion of *Mezentius* to his Horſe *Rhæbe*? O *Rhæbe*, we have liv'd long, if any thing can be ſaid to be long liv'd to mortal Men.

Rhæbe diu, res ſi qua diu mortalibus ulla eſt,
Viximus. ——— ——— ———

1991

The Sentence is both good and moral, but I know not why King *Mezentius* makes it to his Horſe, as to a rational Creature. 'Tis good Doctrine loſt, unleſs this Horſe was deſcended in a direct line from *Pegaſus*, and had more reaſon than others.

4. What a ſwelling Vanity does *Virgil* put into the Mouth of *Æneas*, when being near *Carthage*, and asked who he was? He moſt ridiculouſly anſwers,

Sum pius Æneas famâ ſuper æthera notus.

This is not becoming in his own Mouth, no more than what he ſaid to *Lauſus*: Comfort your ſelf in your Misfortune: you dy by the hand of great *Æneas*. *Æneæ magni dextrâ cadis.* Such proud Sentiments of himſelf, mixt with his Bigotry, are beyond any we can make.

5. I inſiſt not on his comparing the Beauty of *Aſcanius* to a piece of Ivory ſet in Box; nor a Queen angry, to a Top which Children whip in a Porch; with ſome few Pedantick Notes and Conceits of Wit.

Num capti potuere capi? num incenſa cremavit?

Sect. VI.

Homer *and* Virgil's *Style and Expreſſion.*

RULE V.

HEroic Expreſſion, which is the manner of ſetting forth noble Sentiments, ought to have theſe Conditions; 1. To be Proper and Pure. 2. Plain and Clear. 3. Splendid and Lofty. 4. Numerous and Sounding. To which may be added a 5th. To diſcern exactly what ought to be ſaid Figuratively, and what Plainly.

Homer's *Expreſſion compar'd with the Rule.*

In this part it is, where all agree, that *Homer* Triumphs. *Rapin* obſerves well, *Compar. of Hom. & Virg. Chap.* 9. That moſt of the Ancients who have given ſuch Praiſes to *Homer*, minded only the Elegancy of his Expreſſion: and that 'tis by the wonderful Talent in the Greek Tongue, that *Homer* charm'd all Antiquity and the Learned in all Ages; eſpecially in the occaſions where he goes about to Exhort, Perſwade, or to Comfort. Yet is not this Poet altogether free neither, adds *Rapin, Ch.* 10. from ſome ſmall Faults in this Point, ariſing from human Frailty, or a pardonable Negligence in his Tranſitions and Epithets.

——— non ego paucis
Offendor maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura.

His *Tranſitions* which by their Character ought to be much varied, to prevent loathing, are all alike in the moſt part of his Work; one cannot reckon up above 20 or 30 ſorts at moſt, in the ſpace of near 30000 Verſes. His *Epithetes* and *Adverbs* make up one of his greateſt Beauties; yet are many of them Uſeleſs and General; as well as his ſundry *Dialects*, to lengthen and ſhorten the Syllables of his Verſes, which would prove a thing very impertinent in *Engliſh*.

Virgil's *Expreſſion compar'd with the Rule.*

Tho' Monſieur *Segrais*, in his *Preface to* Virgil *tranſlated, Numb.* 14. pretends that *Virgil*'s Expreſſion is Magnificent, Even and Pure, to ſuch a degree, that no other ever attained to: tho' *Rapin* alſo pretends that *Virgil*'s Words are Things. *Compar. Hom. Virg. Chap.* 13. *&* 11. Yet *Victorius* the chief Critick of *Italy*, in his *Comment on Ariſtotle*, and *Balzac* in his *Oeuvres Diverſes*, both accuſe *Virgil* of miſtaking words the one for the other, and to be leſs Pure and Latin than *Lucretius*.

If it be true that *Obſcurity* is the greateſt of all Faults in matter of Stile, I know not how *Virgil* can be excuſed, or paſs for a Writer in hundreds of Paſſages in his *Æneis*. For inſtance, Did any one yet ever underſtand what *Virgil* means, at the latter end of his ſixth Book, by theſe following Verſes?

Sunt gemini Somni portæ: quarum altera fertur
Cornea, quâ veris facilis datur exitus umbris:
Altera, Candenti perfecta nitens Elephanto;
Sed falſa ad cœlum mittunt inſomnia manes.
His ubi tum natum Anchiſes unaque Sibyllam
Proſequitur dictis, portaque emittit eburna.

Either this is Nonſenſe, or it ſignifies that all what *Æneas* ſaw in Hell, is but a meer falſe lying Dream. One would think, that having taken pains to ſhew what ſhould be the glorious Poſterity of *Æneas*, he intended now to deſtroy the belief thereof.

Clarty being the firſt Vertue of Eloquence: *Prima eſt Eloquentiæ Virtus, perſpicuitas. Quint. Lib.* 2. *Cap.* 3. good Senſe requires that we think always clearly, and expreſs our ſelves the ſame: Elſe the Sublime, Wonderful, and Pleaſingneſs ſignifies but little, or rather nothing pleaſes that is not underſtood, and where we are in a continual Fog, Miſt, and Darkneſs. I queſtion much whether thoſe we underſtand not, underſtood themſelves, if they were compell'd to explain their meaning, as the famous *Lopé de Vega* ingeniouſly own'd to *Camus* Biſhop of *Bellay*, that he underſtood not himſelf one of his own Sonnets.

Brevity, ſays *Horace*, is a great occaſion of Obſcurity. *Dum brevis ſum, obſcurus fio.* It often happens, that with binding up things too cloſe, we choak or ſtifle them, as we may ſay. So that a Thought is obſcure, when not enlarged out ſo far as it ought; as in a Geographical Map, where the Towns, Rivers, and Hills are crouded together. This I judge to be the occaſion of *Virgil*'s frequent Obſcurity. For moſt Criticks look on *Virgil* with our excellent Mr. *Dryden, as a ſuccinct, and grave, Majeſtick Writer; one who— was ſtill aiming to croud his Senſe into as narrow a compaſs as poſſibly he could. For which reaſon he is ſo* Figurative,

that

that he requires (I may almoſt ſay) a Grammar apart to conſtrue him. Virgil *therefore* (adds he) *being ſo very ſparing of his Words,---- and leaving ſo much to be imagin'd by the Reader,---- is much the cloſeſt of any Roman Poet.* Again, Virgil *ſtudying brevity,---- ſome have call'd him the Torture of Grammarians.* Dryden's *Preface to the 2. Part of the Miſcellanies.* Add to this plain, tho' indirect Confeſſion of *Virgil's* Obſcurity, *Ruæus's* Tranſlation of all his Works into Latin plain Proſe, for a more general aſſiſtance againſt the ſaid Obſcurity.

Methinks the words of Spits, Kettles, Pans, Garbage and Greaſe, are very mean, yet are they as frequent in the *Æneis*, as in our Kitchins.

Tergora diripiunt coſtis, & viſcera nudant,
Pars in fruſta ſecant, verubuſque trementia figunt.
Littore ahena locant alii. *Lib.* 1.
Subjiciunt verubus prunas, & viſcera torrent. *Lib.* 5.
——— —— *pingues ſpatiatur ad Aras.* *Lib.* 4.
Pingue ſuperque oleum fundens ardentibus Extis,
Pars calidos latices, & ahena undantia flammis.

Here is enough to turn a ſqueamiſh Readers Stomach. But good Father *Boſſu* tells us, that ſuch Kitchin-ſtuff Expreſſions are ſavoury to the Holy Ghoſt. *Tout cela etoit au gouſt du S. Eſprit même, qui n'a pu l'avoir mauvais. Tra. du Poem Epic. l. 6. ch. 8.*

Tho' it is allowable to ſtretch the *Hyperbole* beyond the bounds of Truth, yet ought it not to paſs thoſe of Probability, as *Virgil* does in deſcribing the Nimbleneſs of *Camilla.*

Illa, vel intactæ ſegetis per ſumma volaret
Gramina: nec teneras curſu læſiſſet ariſtas:
Vel mare per medium, fluctu ſuſpenſa tumenti,
Ferret iter; celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas.

I queſtion much whether in an Heroic Poem, one may make a Princeſs run over Ears of Corn, without bending them; over the Waves of the Sea, without wetting the ſole of her Foot.

Again,

Again, our Laureat Poet tells us, that *Marcellus* was ſo Valiant, that none could withſtand him, whether he fought on Foot, or whether he prickt the Shoulders of his Horſe with his Spurs.

——————*foderet calcaribus armos.*

'Tis unſufferable, that to make an harmonious Verſe, a Poet ſhall ſay; that a Gentleman ſpurr'd the Shoulders of his Horſe, inſtead of his Sides.

Some accuſe *Virgil*, and with Truth, of repeating over not only the ſame things, but the very ſame Verſes alſo, as theſe before quoted.

Obſtupui, ſteteruntque comæ, & vox faucibus hæſit. Lib. 2. 774.
Obſtupui, ſteteruntque comæ, & vox faucibus hæſit. Lib. 3. 48.

He has alſo his Tautologies of Letters, and Rhymes, as,

——————————*Talia dicta dabat,*
Nuſquam omittebat, oculoſque ſub aſtra tenebat.

Conſider well theſe Expreſſions, and tell me wherein conſiſts their Elegancy? Is it in their ſnarling Syllables? or in their hiſſing Harſhneſs?

——————*Invecta rotis Aurora rubebat.*
——————*Nec quæ pepegere recuſant.*
Non Teucros agat in Rutulos, Teucrum arma quieſcant
Et Rutulum————————
Diſſiluit, ſulva reſplendent fragmina arena.

The

The CLOSE.

FRom all that has been ſaid, I think I may ſafely infer, That *the Compleat Heroic Poem is yet unborn*; That the Ancients have made but coarſe draughts of this ſort of Poeſie, and that it is reſerv'd to the Moderns to ſet the laſt hand thereunto, for Invention, Form and Contrivance, Characters and Sentiments; tho', for *Expreſſion*, they will ever come ſhort, becauſe the Modern Languages are far inferior, to the *Greek* eſpecially. Beſides, that the Rules of the Epic Poeſie are better underſtood now a days than ever before; ſince the famous Conteſt of *Torquato Taſſo* with the Academy of *Florence* about his Poem of *Jeruſalem deliver'd*, of which the Eloquent *Balzac* ſaid well, that in this kind of excellent Writing, *Virgil* is the cauſe that *Taſſo* is not the firſt, and *Taſſo*, that *Virgil* is not the only. *Diſcours ſur la Tragedie d' Herode par Heinſius.*

Tho' the Party againſt *Homer* and *Virgil* is the leaſt, 'tis neither the leſs Strong, nor the leſs Rational. And I am apt to believe, that notwithſtanding *Caſaubon*'s Curſe: *Qui Homerum contemnunt, vix illis optari quidquam pejus poteſt, quam ut fatuitate ſua fruantur. Caſaub. diſſertat. de Homero*, it would become Victorious over the other, if the neceſſity we are in, to put *Homer* and *Virgil* into the hands of Youth, for their rare *Expreſſion* in Greek and Latin, did not make them deal favourably with abundance of things, which otherwiſe they would condemn. *Alcibiades* therefore was in the right to Box that Maſter, in whoſe School he found not *Homer*'s Works. *Apophthegm. Principum in Plutarch.*

Let therefore *Homer* and *Virgil*'s Poems be confin'd to the Schools, where *Evangelus* in *Macrobio* thinks them only proper, *inſtituendis tantùm pueris idonea. Saturnal. Lib.* 1. *C.* 24. for their excellent Language, for their proper, clear, natural, ſublime, and numerous Expreſſions: But not appear at Court, nor be put into the hands of ſuch Scholars as wear Swords by their ſides, and hold a Commanders Staff in their hand.

Finally,

Finally, let Authors commend as much as they pleaſe all *Homer*'s Books and Cantos ſingle and by themſelves, becauſe moſt of them contain abundance of Wit and much Delight: But as for a curious Contrivance of an Heroic Poem, and a regular *Oeconomy* of an Epic Fable, as I ſee none, I cannot much commmend them to the peruſal of Gentlemen, ſays *Perrault. Compar. of the Ancient with the Modern.*

FINIS.